

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Guidance on Government Cellular Telephone Usage

1. Purpose. To provide guidance to commanders and staff on the recent regulatory guidelines concerning the use of government issued cellular phones.

2. References.

a. AR 25-1, Army Knowledge Management and Information Technology Management, dated 30 June 2004.

b. DOD 5500.7-R, the Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)

3. Facts.

a. Government issued cellular phones may now be used for either official or authorized uses. Official calls are defined as those that are necessary in the interest of the Government. They are limited to requirements that cannot be satisfied by other available telecommunications methods and are authorized when warranted by mission requirements, technical limitations, feasibility, or cost considerations.

b. Authorized use includes brief communications made by DOD employees while they are traveling on Government business to notify family members of transportation or schedule changes. Authorized use also includes personal communications from the DOD employee's usual workplace that are most reasonably made while at the work place (such as checking in with a spouse or minor children and scheduling doctor and auto or home repair appointments). Such communications may be permitted by a commander/supervisor, provided they—

(1) Do not adversely affect the performance of official duties by the employee or the employee's organization;

(2) Are of reasonable duration and frequency, and, whenever possible, are made during the employee's personal time, such as during a break, lunch, and other off-duty periods;

(3) Are not used for activities related to the operation of a personal business enterprise;

(4) Serve a legitimate public interest (such as keeping employees at their desks rather than requiring the use of commercial systems; improving the morale of employees stationed for extended periods away from home);

(5) Do not reflect adversely on the Government; and

(6) Do not result in significant cost to the Government.

c. Whether the use is official or authorized, AR 25-1 prohibits the use of cell phones in lieu of established "wired" telephones, when available.

d. Individuals should not give out cellular phone numbers to others except those individuals who require it due to particular mission requirements.

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e. Individuals making or receiving unauthorized calls on cell phones may be subject to disciplinary action as well as charged for the calls as practicable.

f. Commanders and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that individuals who are issued Government cell phones are fully aware of usage guidelines commensurate with the particular mission requirements for which they were issued.